MISSION
TRAINING
SCHOOL
KIOTO, JAPAN

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American Board of
Commissioners for Foreign
Mission training school,
Koto Japan

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

American Board of Commissioners
for Foreign Missions.

Mission Training School,

KIOTO, JAPAN.

ITS GROWTH AND PROMISE.

1875 – 1884.

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MISSION TRAINING SCHOOL,

KIOTO, JAPAN.

THOSE who were present in 1874, at the farewell meeting of the American Board, at Rutland, Vermont, will remember the feeling awakened by remarks of Mr. Neesima, who was about to start on his return to his native land; especially, the interest felt in his earnest plea for the establishment of a school in Japan for educating young men who may embrace Christianity, and be proper subjects for training for the work of the ministry, and other Christian service among their own people. He was interrupted in his remarks by several individuals pledging sums of money for this purpose, varying in amount from $50 to $1,000; the whole sum pledged being not far from $3,500.

Who Mr. Neesima is, is related in the following extract from the sermon preached by President Seelye, at his ordination in Mount Vernon Church, Boston, September 24, 1874:

"Ten years ago a young Japanese at Yedo, who had been brought up with no other knowledge of religion than his own original insight and the

Pagan systems around him afforded, had become convinced that these systems could not give him the help, or hope, he needed. He had never seen a Christian person, he had never heard of the gospel; but some undefined and shadowy conviction of His presence, who is not far from every one of us, and who has not left Himself in any soul without a witness, had dawned upon him, and given him the sense that the idols he had worshiped — the work of man's hands — were vanity. . . . While in this state of mind, a Japanese friend, having met a little book called the 'Story of the Bible,' written in Chinese, by an American or English missionary, brought the book to this young man, as a strange story which he wished him to read. The young man took it, and when he read therein that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, he received therefrom a new revelation. 'This is the God for whom I have been looking,' he exclaimed, 'This is the true God;' and, in his feeble way, vaguely and indefinitely, hardly knowing at the time what he was doing, this young Japanese began to worship his Divine Creator.

"Besides this new religious sense, he found himself possessed of another feeling, also new; a strange and strong desire to leave Japan and come to America. An account of this country, written in Chinese by Rev. Dr. Bridgman, of the American Board, first suggested this desire.

His father forbade him; but called of God, as was Abraham, he left his father's house, and not daring to attempt escaping from Yokohama, the nearest seaport to Yedo, and where he might be recognized, he went to the other side of the country, where he found, at Hakodadi, a vessel which would take him to China, if he could but get on board. . . . He would have lost his head had he been discovered in the attempt; but one night he managed to elude observation, and gained access to the vessel. He was taken to Shanghai, where he was led to a ship belonging to a Christian merchant of Boston, in which he was brought to these shores, the captain giving him his passage for his service on the way. 'What are you doing here, and why did you come?' said to him one of the sailors in the port after his arrival. 'I have come for an education,' was the reply. 'But an education in this country costs a great deal, and where will you get the money?' was the next inquiry. 'I do not know,' was the simple answer; and in simple faith the young man knelt in secret, and prayed that he might not fail in his great desire. . . . Thus far his prayers were directed to God as his Creator. He had not yet any clear consciousness of God as his personal Redeemer and Saviour. He did not call himself at this time a Christian; he could not then have told what was implied in such a name. . . .

"By the wise counsel, the judicious and ample

generosity, and the warm Christian sympathy of a Christian merchant of Boston, and his Christian wife, this Japanese, thus led from the land of his fathers, has been enabled successfully to pursue a course of academic, collegiate, and theological study, at Phillips Academy, Amherst College, and Andover Seminary — winning the respect and love of all who know him."

The history of the training school is told in part in the following extracts from missionary letters. Please note the growth from year to year.

In November, 1875, Rev. J. D. Davis writes:

"Kioto was founded more than a thousand years ago, and remained the seat of the Mikado's government until the Shogun was dethroned, eighty years ago, and the Mikado moved to Yedo, the eastern capital. Kioto is nearly in the center of the empire, in a rich and populous valley, ten or fifteen miles in diameter, nearly surrounded with mountains. It has water communication nearly all the way with Osaka, over thirty miles distant. The railroad is also nearly finished, which will give us communication with Osaka in an hour, and with Kobe in two hours. There are in the city 3,500 Buddhist temples, and 2,500 Shintoo temples. There are about 8,000 Buddhist priests, and about 2,500 keepers of Shintoo shrines. The population of the city and its suburbs, by the census of 1872, was 567,334.

"Kioto has long been considered the spiritual

capital of the empire, and Buddhism is probably stronger here today than in any other place in Japan. The sad minor tones of the vesper bells are heard in every direction each evening, and the matins are heard ringing out from fifty or more temples during all the last hours of the night.

"Through Mr. Neesima's influence the mission has secured five and a half acres of land in the northern part of the city, for a site for the training school, and also, as we hope, at no distant day, of a Christian college; and through Mr. Neesima's personal application to the Minister of Education at Yedo, with whom he formed an intimate acquaintance while with the Embassy in America and Europe, he has permission to start a Christian school here, in which missionaries may teach.

"We opened school yesterday with eight scholars, all but two of whom are church members."

September 16, 1876, Rev. Mr. Learned writes:

"The school buildings were finished a few days ago, and this morning we have been assigning rooms to the boys who have already come. There is room for about sixty boys, and from present appearances we shall have that number of students in a week or two. We shall dedicate the buildings next Monday (the 18th), with singing, prayer, and addresses."

Mr. Davis wrote on the same day:

"There are twenty-eight young men in the buildings this morning, sixteen more hourly expected, and twelve or fifteen more in a few days. About two thirds of the whole number are Christians, and *all* are much interested in the truth. The Christian young men are here to prepare to preach the gospel to their countrymen, and the city is opening to the truth wonderfully, new preaching places being rapidly opened."

Within a year another building was wanted, and September 15, 1877, Rev. Mr. Learned writes:

"The new building for the training school is making rapid progress, and will be well on towards completion when you read this letter. When it is completed, we shall have rooms for about a hundred students, and shall be supplied with recitation-rooms, etc., to answer all our needs for some time to come. We begin [reöpen] our school next Monday, and the prospect is that we shall have nearly if not quite eighty scholars on that day. I am glad to say that I begin teaching the gospels then, teaching in Japanese, of course. Among our new scholars are three who have come from the Imperial College in Tokio, coming here for the sake of the Christian influence and instruction. One of them brings his sister, to enter Miss Starkweather's school. Another new scholar, who comes from Niigata, on the north coast, is a

man over thirty years of age, and comes with his wife. He will take the three-years' Bible course in our school, and his wife will study in the girls' school. They have taken a little house not far from us."

October 17, 1877, Rev. Mr. Davis writes:

"We have now in the training school here eighty-seven young men, from various parts of the Empire. Some are from Hiogo, three hundred and fifty miles southwest, and some came from the Island of Yesso, five hundred or six hundred miles northeast. At twenty minutes before eight o'clock the whole school meets in the chapel in the main building, for morning prayers. The exercises consist of singing, reading the Scriptures, and prayer, all in Japanese. At five o'clock, P.M., the students have a prayer-meeting in the same place. Each one of the twenty-five recitations every day is opened with prayer. Bible exegesis is taught during four consecutive hours each day, to as many different classes, numbering from fifteen to thirty each.

"Of these eighty-seven young men, forty-three have been received into our churches. Several others have applied for admission, and so far as I know, we have not one student who is opposed to the truth, or who is not an earnest student of it.

"Fifteen or twenty of our older young men went out to preach the gospel during the long vacation last summer. Some places paid all the

expenses of the young men, others a part only, and some of the students went out on preaching tours or circuits.

"An urgent call came from Mr. Neesima's old home, eighty miles from Yedo, for a young man to come up there, offering to pay all expenses. Mr. Yebina went; and he left ten men and five women there, whom he believes to be true Christians, who have banded themselves together into a Christian company. They offer to pay his expenses again if he will go up during the short holiday vacation. Four young men have come from that place to our school. In another place to which a student went, ten men have banded themselves together into a Christian company. More places called for the gospel than there were men who could go out."

Mr. Davis writes again, in February, 1878:

"The leaven is working among these millions. Our training school now numbers over one hundred, and most of them have consecrated their lives, as we hope, to the work of preaching the gospel."

The report of 1879 thus speaks:

"The number of students in the training school the past year was one hundred and twenty-seven, all of them boarders. Of these, fifteen, who were in the theological class, have now completed their studies, and are entering upon the work of evangelization. Mr. Davis has taught Theology, Pastoral Theology, Mental

and Moral Philosophy, and the Christology of the Old Testament; Mr. Learned the Gospels, the Historical Books of the Old Testament, Church History, and Political Economy; Mr. Neesima, Harmony of the Gospels, Geometry, Natural Philosophy, and Astronomy. Of the one hundred students who constituted about the average number during the year, only twenty-two have received aid, thirteen of them as assistant teachers. In view of the necessity of thorough culture and discipline, required to meet the special wants of Japan, it has been decided to change the course which has hitherto continued for five years, combining English and theology, to a term of seven years, the English course to cover five years, and the theological two.

"The first year is to be devoted entirely to English; the second to Arithmetic, Geography, and Grammar; the third to History and Mathematics; the fourth will include Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Chemistry, and Rhetoric; and the fifth, Political Economy, Geology, Mental Philosophy, International Law, History of Civilization, and Logic. Instruction will be given throughout the course in the Gospels, in Old Testament History, in the Harmony of the Gospels, and in the Evidences of Christianity. The theological course will extend over two years, and will include Theology, Pastoral Theology, Homiletics, Church History, Bible Geog-

raphy and Antiquities, the Exegesis of the Epistles and Prophecies. This statement will show the thorough character of the instruction given in this institution, as a preparation for the work of the ministry."

The record of 1882 is as follows:

"Dr. Greene is to take charge of a theological department in connection with the training school, for such pupils as cannot wisely take the English course. The demand for preachers is so urgent that it has seemed necessary to institute a shorter course of study, in the vernacular, for young men of promise, who could not well take the longer course and yet have a desire to make the gospel known to their countrymen.

"The training school graduated a class of eighteen from the English Department, of whom all but one have made public profession of their faith in Christ. An English theological class of eighteen was received, and is to take a course of three years — the first year being devoted to the Old Testament and Church History; the second, to the New Testament and Theology; the third, to Homiletics and Pastoral Care, Biblical Theology, and the Prophecies. The whole number of students in the training school the past year was one hundred and two; preparatory, four; first year, thirty-six; second, twenty-four; third, eighteen; fourth, eleven; fifth, nine; besides eighteen in theological class.

To provide for the increasing number of pupils, a new dormitory has been built, which will accommodate sixty-four new pupils, and a new chapel gives a place long needed, for morning prayers and other public services. The death of Mr. Yamasaki is a great loss to the institution. He was a thorough scholar, a successful teacher, and an earnest Christian on whom great hopes centered."

1883 continues the record:

"The Kioto training school reported, in April last, a total membership of one hundred and thirty-six pupils; twenty-six in the theological department, and one hundred and ten in the English and scientific department. Of the theological students, eighteen pursued the regular English course, the remaining eight taking the new vernacular course. The fifth class in the English and scientific department was composed of eight students, the fourth and third class each of thirteen, the second of thirty-four, and the first of forty-two. Five of the six men who graduated last year from the English department entered the theological school this year, and three of them have been in attendance all the year. Owing to the lack of teachers, they were obliged to study with the class that had entered the previous year, but the united class has done good work.

"The vernacular school was begun as an experiment in September, 1882. It offers a three-

years' course of study, covering the sciences in general and theology in particular, and aims to raise an educated native ministry from among those who cannot pursue the long English course. Difficulty has been experienced this year because some of the eight students were not sufficiently prepared to take up the studies pursued. Some changes will doubtless be made before the school is fully established; but the record of the year warrants the belief that the institution is needed and will do good work. The Doshisha company, the Board of Japanese Trustees of the Training School, has been enlarged, and now consists of five members. They hold the property of the school, and transact all its business with the government."

The following letter from Dr. Gordon was received in January, 1884, showing the value of work accomplished by the students among the villages:

"A number of the theological students were away preaching during the summer. They were not without trials and difficulties, but were, on the whole, encouraged.

"Mr. Tsuji, of the class that graduated in June, ministered to the Hikone church, being wholly supported by the people. He had two Bible classes daily, and the usual Sunday services. Mr. Neesima went there and baptized five persons at the close of the vacation. Some of the members of this church living at Naga-

hama, six or eight miles further up the lake, invited Mr. Hori, of our theological class, to work for them during the summer, they assuming the expenses. He did so, with evident benefit to the believers, and with some increase of interest among others. Both he and Mr. Tsuji plan to visit these places twice monthly during the coming year.

"Two young men went to Fukui, where they had good audiences, many of those most interested being school-teachers, doctors, officials, etc. At Kameoka, in Tamba, there was steady interest and progress. Two persons were baptized early in this month, becoming members of our third church in Kioto.

"In Kishi Wada the interest is reviving. Six persons from that place were received into one of the Osaka churches in August. They have asked Mr. Matsuo, one of our theological students, to go there for work among them, when he has finished his course of study.

"Mr. Kameyama, of the same class, went to Kurashiki, west of Okayama. A wealthy *saké* merchant from that vicinity has just been here, and has decided, after consultation with the Christians, to give up his business. At Kasaoka, another out-station of Okayama, one of our students labored, and reports that a goodly number are interested.

"Another theological student went to Shikoku, to help Mr. Ise. The development of

the work there is truly wonderful. Preaching has been kept up almost daily at Imabari and other places.

"At Komatsu there was violent opposition; the Christian meetings were stoned. The Christians did not retaliate, except by praying for their persecutors, who soon grew tired of their fruitless efforts to anger or frighten the Christians. The stones that were thrown — a good-sized pile, I am told — were afterward gathered up, and they propose to put them into the foundation of a new church, which they are planning to build. To this church ninety members have been added since January 1.

"An almost equally prosperous work is going on at Annaka, the former home of Mr. Neesima's parents. In the six years since this church was organized, about one hundred persons have become members of it. The additions of the past few months have been about seventy. They are planning and doing a broad work for the surrounding villages."

Dr. Davis also writes:

"Of the students who have been present this term, twenty-nine are in the theological department; fourteen in the five-years' course, to graduate next summer from the college department, all but two of whom are Christians; thirteen are in the four-years' course, all but two of whom are Christians; twenty-nine in the

three-years' course, all but four Christians; forty-five in the two-years' course, who came, most of them, from heathen homes, a little more than a year ago, about half of whom are Christians; and thirty-five in the one-year course, just entered, five or six of whom are Christians as they enter, the first fruits, as it were, of our Christian families. Such is the spiritual status of the school. It is glorious. The work is glorious. Oh, that these one hundred and sixty-five young men were all ready to go out and preach the gospel today!"

The growth and promise of this important institution have compelled the erection of a new brick building for the students, which is now nearly completed and which will cost about $7,500.

There can be no better seed-corn for golden harvests for the future of Japan than investments in such an institution as this. Do not fail to remember its instructors and students continually in prayer.

Sent from Rooms of A. B. C. F. M., 1 Somerset Street, Boston, January 21, 1884. E. K. A.

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